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by Ludovic Halévy, the new Academician. No purer or more delicious little love story could be found. It is difficult enough to read in a class somewhat advanced. 'La Mère de la marquise,' by Edmond About, is amusing from beginning to end and would interest any class if not taken in too small doses. It is in very idiomatic French. 'Le Siège de Berlin et autres contes,' by Alphonse Daudet, is a selection of six short sketches, carefully chosen from several books published by this author hitherto virtually excluded from the class room, partly on account of the high price of the books and partly because no one volume contains only what an instructor would think it advisable to present to his pupils. Daudet's French is not easy reading. It is rich in words, rich in new, startling and unexpected forms of expression; but this is not so apparent in the 'Contes' as in other works not appropriate for school purposes. 'La Mare au diable,' by George Sand, is an old favorite with teachers; its high merit need not be dwelt upon. 'Peppino' is a graceful little story written in New York by Mr. L. D. Ventura, instructor in Italian and French. Judging from the author's enthusiastic preface the book underwent some 'excellentes *altérations*,' to use his own words, from the hand of Mr. Van Daell of Philadelphia, but probably he did not submit this preface to him. The 'Idylles,' by Henry Gréville, do not do justice to this graceful and charming writer, several of whose books, notably 'Dosia' published in the series of 'Romans choisis,' are well adapted for text-books, all being written in the easy, fluent French of this bright and clever writer. Mr. Jenkins promises, as the seventh number of the 'Contes choisis,' 'Carine' by Louis Énault.

These are the publications of one American house in less than three years, and I have by no means spoken of all Mr. Jenkins' books. He certainly has succeeded in his endeavor to make them low in price and excellent in type and appearance. It is to be regretted that some, especially the earlier numbers, are marred by disturbing misprints. For instance in Scribe's 'Bertrand et Raton' some of the entirely useless foot-notes of the original edition indicating the relative position of the actors are printed in the text itself, as on p. 47. It is a pleasure however to note that the last, 'Le

Mariage de Gabrielle,' has been very carefully corrected. This promises well for the future and disarms criticism.

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## THE PHILOSOPHY OF DIALECT.

The foreigner who falters through the mazes of speech with a tongue, according to the caprice of the author; of all degrees of clumsiness, has in every literature abundant exemplification. In America, where the population of almost any section will furnish numerous instances of people from foreign parts but lately arrived on these shores, such dialect must necessarily form not only a legitimate, but a characteristic mode of expression. As is to be expected, American writers do make use of such dialect with exceptional frequency. It is to be found everywhere—upon the stage, in novels, in magazine stories and in the newspapers; one American author, Mr. Leland, has even made it the burden of a whole series of "ballads." From the composite character of our population, these English speaking foreigners are of all manner of origin. Germans, Frenchmen and Italians are scattered broadcast over the land and form constituent elements of the body politic; while Chinamen, Scandinavians, Slavs and Celts, and the representatives of a host of minor nationalities, have settled here and there, for the most part in small communities. The Irishman, whom we have always with us, does not properly come into consideration here. His language is, from the very start, an English patois entitled to its vagaries of expression by lawful transmission from a long line of preceding generations.

The German divides with the Irishman the honor of constituting the weighty part of our foreign element—the part which, from its size and importance, is most assertive; the part to which, in short, our attention is most often and most powerfully drawn. Of all the different modes of expression that a foreign tongue involuntarily produces when struggling with our elusive English, we are, accordingly, accustomed most often to read and to hear that particular form which arises from the imitation of a German original. To understand this inter-

national hodge-podge is, indeed, in some parts of the country, a linguistic problem that must be solved by every-one early in life, for its every day recurrence is assured. In spite, however, of the wide-spread familiarity with this alien pronunciation of English, it is curious to observe the clumsiness with which American writers use it. This is apt to be the case wherever it is employed. It is not only characteristic of the hastily written 'news item' and the newspaper anecdote, but it may also be discovered in the more carefully considered matter of the magazines or in the last new novel. It is the modest purpose of this little article to point out some of the fallacies that frequently mislead the writer of this form of expression, and to establish, in its rudiments, a philosophy of dialect.

It is evident at the outset, that in the case of a foreigner speaking English two factors are to be taken into consideration—his own native language, and the language of his adoption. According to circumstances he will speak this new language with a greater or less degree of proficiency. But as he speaks this language well or ill, exactly in that ratio will he leave out or incorporate elements of his old, familiar medium of communication. A person speaks a foreign language perfectly who betrays neither in pronunciation nor in idiom, the presence of any other linguistic standard than the one which he is temporarily using.

From the very nature of the case there are all stages of linguistic acquisition, and it depends upon the individual with what proficiency a new language is assimilated and, to a less extent, in what order it is acquired. To some people pronunciation is the stone in the path; others will find an obstacle in construction; others, again, in vocabulary. All individuals, however, of a given nationality, even if in different degrees, will meet with the same difficulties in pronunciation and the same difficulties in construction. Vocabulary alone will be an inconstant element, depending almost wholly upon the degree of retentiveness of the memory of the learner. It will not, however, be so far in excess of pronunciation and idiom that it is perfect, while they are notably false.

In "A Roman Singer," Mr. Marion Crawford introduces among his dramatis personae a retired Prussian colonel, resident in Rome. Ac-

cording to the author, "he speaks Italian intelligibly, but with the strangest German construction, and he rolls the letter *r* curiously in his throat." At the first glance we have here a linguistic problem from its many elements difficult to solve. In reality it is easy enough, for the Graf has no taint of Italian and speaks faultless English, so far as pronunciation goes. "You are a singularly young man to be a professor," he says to Nino. "And how have you the education obtained in order the obligations and not-to-be-avoided responsibilities of this worthy-of-all-honor career to meet?" Further on he says, "You have me understood. I have all the books bought, of which you speak. You will repeat, and I will in the book follow. Then shall we know each other much better." The Graf then demands of Nino a certain Canto of Purgatory. "Where Dante meets Beatrice," exclaims Nino. "My hitherto not-by-any-means-extensive, but always from-the-conscience-undertaken, reading reaches not so far. You will it repeat. So shall we know," replies the Graf, and so on for several pages.

Now, to the unthinking reader this may appear all right. The idiom in the main is German, so far as the construction is concerned, although even here there is an occasional lapse. In order to be consistent the German should have been made to say, 'You are a singularly young man a professor *to be*' and, 'Then shall we each other much better *know*.' In point of fact, one who could have used such an unimpeachable vocabulary as the Graf von Lira, never would have retained those distinctive German grammatical devices of throwing the verb to the end of the sentence, and of piecing together long adjective phrases qualifying the noun—constructions even more foreign to Italian than to English.

If the statement made above be true it will necessarily follow that, for instance, all German dialect or all Italian dialect will have certain unmistakable generic signs and this is actually the case. This does not, of course, preclude the possibility of individual peculiarity. One person may, for instance, early rid himself of a certain pronunciation which another will long retain, or one will stubbornly cling to a familiar idiom which another will easily lose. The difference, however, is in degree, not in kind, and does not affect the principal statement.

Since the reasons for dialect of the kind here considered are rooted in the parent language of the speaker, it is an absolute necessity that the writer should have at least some knowledge of the language which is thus unconsciously taken as a norm. If this is not the case it does not matter how familiar the imitator may be with the spoken dialect; he cannot render it as it should be, and even a cursory examination will reveal its inconsistencies.

A writer in a recent number of the *Century* betrays herself immediately by the dialect which she puts into the mouths of several of her characters. Ignorance of German does not, of course, in itself constitute a literary crime, but the result in this case is disastrous, for a language is evolved that could have had no possible counterpart in reality. "You tink we are fine gentlemen and ladies, like dese Americans dat is too proud to vork vid hands. I say tam dis country, vere dey say all is alike, an' vork all; and ven you come here, it is dat nobody vill vork, if he can help, and vimmins is shame to be seen vork. It is not shame to be seen vork; I vork, mein vife vork too, an' my childrens vork, too, py tam," says farmer Weitbreck. Further on the same speaker says, "He cannot English speak, many vords; but dat is nothing; he can vork. I tolt you dere would be mans come!" Again, "Mein frau, she is goot; goot frau, goot mütter—American fraus not goot so she; all the time talk and no vork; American fraus, American mans, are sheep in dere house."

As in the quotation so throughout the story everybody, with a strange consistency, persists in putting the good old housewife, the *mutter*, in the plural, but that is the least important error. Farmer Weitbreck is inconsistent. In his dialect he says *tink*, but *dese*, and *dat*, and *dis*. In the same way, he uses *proud* and *would* and *vords*, but *tolt* and *goot*. Again, he says *py*, but *nobody* and *but*; he uses alike *is* and *ish*; he finds no difficulty in pronouncing *we*, but he says *vork*, and *vill*, and *vife*. A German of farmer Weitbreck's linguistic attainments would, moreover, have been nonplussed by the *g* in *gentlemen*, and the *ch* in *childrens*; he would have said *shentlemen* and *shildrens*. There are other errors of commission. *Mans* should be *men*, for it has a good German counterpart that would have suggested itself

immediately, and nobody would have been ingenious enough to have thought out, on the spur of the moment, such a phrase as, "American fraus not goot so she."

An instance of a better and much more consistent use of German dialect may be found in Mr. Boyesen's "Daughter of the Philistines." It is this time a German Jew, Loewenthal by name, who is speaking. "I dell you vat, Meester Vellingfort," he says, "you vant to be a ridge man, eh? Vell now, you dink Simon is a sheat unt a fraut, eh? I dell you vat I vill do. I vill gif you dirty dousand dollars' vort of stock in de 'Maid of Atens,' if you vill bubblish your assay off de one vich I gaf you." On comparing the two extracts given, the truth of one and the artificiality of the other becomes at once apparent without a critical examination of the cause. Although the example last cited mutilates the Queen's English, it, nevertheless, performs its work consistently, and the mistakes are those which a German with an imperfect command of the language would make.

In regard to vocabulary, there are still one or two points to be taken into consideration. In acquiring a new language a stadium is reached, where a vocabulary sufficient for all the ordinary needs of daily life has been assimilated and can be used with comparative ease. Outside of this conquered territory, however, the road is still beset with difficulties and dangers enough to make the wayfarer extremely uncomfortable. But even here an expression would have definite reasons for its being. Supposed English words would be evolved, either built wholly or in part on the foreign model, or after the analogy of known English words. Expressions familiar to the speaker from his own language, on the other hand, might be introduced bodily and be so helplessly incorporated with the rest, that the whole becomes a linguistic mosaic of most complicated and eccentric pattern. It is by no means necessary that a person who mutilates English in this manner should be of a low order of intelligence. An imperfect knowledge of a foreign tongue will cause even a wise man to talk like a fool; for a meagre vocabulary will either force him into trivialities, or the necessary employment of expressions from his own familiar speech will render him, at times, hopelessly unintelligible.

A state of affairs similar to that described might, again, result from causes other than ignorance at any time in the history of the use of a foreign language. It would particularly be the case under the excitement produced by any strong emotion; here the effect would be in direct proportion to the emotional influence brought to bear—the stronger the emotion, the more the new would be lost sight of and the old unerringly called upon to take its place.

When one reflects upon the wide-spread ignorance of German among cultivated people, it becomes a matter of wonder that this German dialect of English fares as well at the hands of writers as it does. French is understood and correctly cited, but to quote German is, in almost every case, to misquote it.

In writing a foreign dialect of the kind considered its two elements must be constantly borne in mind—the new and the old. Such a dialect is not, as some who make use of it in literature seem to think, a simple product of the caprice of the writer, the more ridiculous and outlandish the better. Viewed from the single standpoint of the one language that it seems to parody, it is phenomenal and inconsistent. Its causes, however, lie deeper. When they are uncovered the dialect will, in every case, be found to be wholly a definite and intelligible resultant, whose *raison d'être* is to be sought in the ignorance and misapprehension of the new, encouraged and supported by the old.

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### PRO DOMO.

My object in these lines is to notice the points in Prof. Hart's review of my 'Poetics' (MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES, pp. 17, 18) where I think him at fault and where the subject has interest for scholars. A sense of humor, if not of decency, keeps an American from the puny violence of *Entgegnungen*. I thank Prof. Hart for his suggestions: one or two I should have used for the second edition, now in press, had his review arrived three days earlier.

I oppose absolutely his implied rejection of Style as a branch of Poetics. I claim that Rhetoric has only indirectly to do with poetical

Metaphor, Simile, etc., and should confine itself to the ordinary figures of prose. Metaphor and Personification are the soul of poetic expression, and all figurative prose trades on capital borrowed from poetry. The street-boy who makes a simile has "dropped" to that extent into poetry; add metre and the fall is complete. What will Minto's Prose Manual (Prof. Hart's suggestion) do for poetic style? Fancy Shakspeare taught through Defoe, Lady Macbeth through Mrs. Veal! Will Prof. Hart discuss the point which I make (pp. 105, 107) about the metaphor and simile, and the separation of implied simile from actual metaphor? In my doctor-dissertation, 'The Anglo-Saxon Metaphor,' I assumed that the metaphor is corner-stone of all poetical style; that the simile is developed from it, not the metaphor from the simile—as all treatises agree in putting it. In Dr. Hoffmann's vigorous attack (*Eng. Stud.* VI, 163-216) on my dissertation, this assumption is not combated. Metaphors are the foundation of poetic language; their different forms are highly important for the study of poetry itself; and in this cool banishment of Style from Poetics, Prof. Hart condemns Hegel, Carriere and all the German writers on the subject. He must do something more than issue his ukase in the matter; he must justify it.

That was commission; omission was my failure to give a full analysis of each epoch-making work, such as the 'Psychomachia' of Prudentius. Such omissions are virtues in a hand-book; the teacher may discourse at will on Prudentius, and give "abstracts of the late Greek Romances," but the text-book should furnish the merest foundation. The teacher builds upon it according to his plan and bricks. But I pass to the great fact of poetry, the one indisputable fact,—Metre. Will Prof. Hart pardon my disappointment at finding in his remarks a discussion of the *fragile et caducum* of this subject, rather than of the *stabile et firmum*? That is, he does not attempt to pass judgment on my endeavor to build out of the material collected by trustworthy scholars something *stabile et firmum* which we may teach our classes as the essential of English Metre. Even in the trifling points which he makes, he is unfortunate. Thus the *ottava rima*, which I call simple and of easy pace, is